

City Council Meeting Minutes

**February 25, 2020
City Hall, Council Chambers
749 Main Street
7:00 PM**

Call to Order – Mayor Stolzmann called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken and the following members were present:

City Council: ***Mayor Ashley Stolzmann
Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Maloney
Councilmember Kyle Brown
Councilmember J. Caleb Dickinson
Councilmember Deborah Fahey
Councilmember Chris Leh***

Absent: ***Councilmember Jeff Lipton***

Staff Present: ***Heather Balser, City Manager
Megan Davis, Deputy City Manager
Nathan Mosely, Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Director
Dean Johnson, Parks Superintendent
Ember Brignull, Open Space Superintendent
Meredyth Muth, City Clerk***

DISCUSSION/DIRECTION – INTEGRATED WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN HERBICIDE USE

Director Mosely stated this meeting is to get direction from City Council regarding the proposed Changes to the Integrated Weed Management Plan (IWMP).

Director Mosely stated staff discusses this topic regularly and added that in 2008 herbicide use was discontinued for a while but due to community requests was continued again.

Director Mosely reviewed the integrated weed management program to help address noxious weeds. It is a high level document with no specific outcome dictated. It includes prevention, public education, monitoring weed locations, and control via biological, chemical, cultural, and mechanical means. He noted no one control method works for all species or locations.

Director Mosely reviewed current practices. For parks it includes a combination of control options including herbicide use and regulations. Herbicides are applied with spot spraying as needed and broadleaf herbicide used once each year. He stated they discontinued spraying herbicides in playgrounds in 2017. Open Space staff uses a variety of methods for weed control, the vast majority is done via mowing and hand pulling. Open Space uses a wide variety of herbicides. He noted the Open Space Division is mandated by the State Department of Agriculture to control noxious weeds. The goal is to allow native species to thrive.

He stated the Open Space Board (OSAB) supports changes to the IWMP and current operational practices related to weed management on Open Space Properties. The Parks Board (PPLAB) feels strongly the City should reduce the application of herbicides and also recommends an outreach campaign.

Director Mosely reviewed the operational alternatives for Open Space. It could remain status quo, it could allow for the use of 2, 4-D and Glyphosate on specific properties or in certain instances, or there could be a full ban of 2, 4-D on Open Space properties.

For parks the alternatives include the status quo, targeted reductions in some parts and use in other specific areas, or a full ban on 2,4-D and Glyphosate.

Staff is requesting direction on updates to the IWMP, specifically the option of no changes on Open Space, and Parks options for reducing use. He added a communication program will be needed to explain changes to residents. He stated the goal is to serve the community and manage the assets of the City.

Mayor Stolzmann asked if the 12 oz. used in Open Space included backpack spraying or if alternatives were used. Brignull stated the two methods used most on Open Space were caution level herbicides and they have replaced Glyphosate with mechanical pulling. They use Glyphosate for cheat grass treatment.

Mayor Stolzmann asked how the Department defines a greenway. Director Mosely stated those areas are non-irrigated lands that are designated as park land. Johnson stated these areas might appear as open space to people but they are maintained like a park.

Councilmember Fahey asked how Elephant Park is being maintained as it is herbicide free and why can't this be done Citywide. She suggested using native plants Citywide to be completely herbicide free. She noted the side effects from herbicides are significant and she would like them banned particularly 2,4D and Glyphosate.

Mayor Stolzmann asked how long we have not been using herbicides in Memory Square. Johnson stated the Department has not been spraying there since 2008.

Councilmember Brown asked what our neighboring municipalities do for herbicide use and how we compare. Director Mosely stated Louisville is probably in the middle. Boulder does

not use it in their parks, but does use it in their Mountain Parks. We try to use the least amount possible to get the outcome we desire.

Councilmember Leh asked how we compare to Boulder County. Director Mosely stated the County uses herbicides in their open spaces.

Councilmember Fahey asked how the medians are treated. Director Mosely stated there is one application of broadleaf each year,

Public Comments

Mary Walker, 852 Trail Ridge Drive, stated she is an expert in this field and studies show causation of how herbicides affect people on the cellular level causing major health impacts on people. This is one exposure we have control over and these things cause damage. The most disturbing part is how close it is applied to water sources.

Tracy Gegan, 659 W. Dahlia St, noted it is a tough task to appease all residents. She stated as a parent the use of herbicides (2,4D and Roundup) are of tremendous concern. Children and pets are particularly vulnerable to the effects of these herbicides and absorb more than adults. She urges banning herbicides in all parks and adopting nontoxic turf management plans.

Allison Johanson, chair of the Sustainability Board, stated the board supports a sustainable approach and moving away from herbicides should be a priority.

Betty Solek, 1101 N Franklin Ave, stated the IWMP does not give enough attention to potential impacts on waterways and waterbodies. She noted examples of what she has seen in medians with contractors spraying from backpack sprayers which allow for overspray and drifting; the medians are designed to shed water into the storm sewers. She recommended redesigning of medians to reduce chemical impacts on the streams.

Angie Layton, 609 West Juniper Court, stated she lives by Heritage Park and sees the dandelions and then they are sprayed by the City. The City is not timing the eradication of the noxious weeds appropriately and not keeping up on what is needed.

Diana Gutowski, 1000 Arapahoe Cir, stated Glyphosate binds tightly to soils and can persist for months in the ground and traces turn up in food products. The City needs a marketing campaign so people know they are going to see dandelions and this is why. Managing expectations of residents is key but creating healthier parks is the goal.

Lauren Keliher, 477 W Harper St, noted the herbicides are effective at creating superweeds that cannot be killed by herbicides so it is not useful in the long term.

Matt Sandler, 990 Arapahoe Circle, stated the community should get out ahead of these issues. He understands people don't want parks full of weeds but children use the parks

and they are affected. The City should identify the parks where the grass is most used by kids or have sections of parks where you know nothing is being sprayed.

Councilmember Dickinson noted the parks and open space staff are trying really hard to be responsible and meet needs. He stated the community is unified behind not using these chemicals but that will mean weeds. It is a choice between chemicals and effort/money. If it is money, that is where we should put additional resources.

Mayor Pro Tem Maloney stated the IWMP is solid and allows for policy options. We have to protect the playgrounds and areas people use. He agreed the weeds have to be addressed with proper timing. He supports reducing use now and moving towards a total ban. It is important to realize that there may be times some herbicide might be needed. We need to use methods that make sense and are not harmful to the community.

Councilmember Brown stated as a parent he would never use these chemicals in his lawn, so why subject others to these chemicals. He agrees the timing of the spraying is key. He would like the IWMP to have specific criteria to dictate when staff will use specific methods and we should use chemicals as a last resort. He supports a ban in parks if not citywide.

Councilmember Leh stated he is concerned about an outright ban as there might be some instances it is needed but we need to move toward weed control with little to no herbicide use. We should expand the number of parks currently piloting no use and we need a broad public education campaign.

Councilmember Fahey stated her job as a councilmember is the health and safety of residents and this is right at the top of this list for health. There is no evidence herbicides are the only way to control weeds. Just starting with Glyphosate and 2,4D would be taking a steps towards those goals. She wants a specific goal and specific time established.

Mayor Stolzmann stated for Open Space she is guided by the Charter which notes nontoxic remedies should be tried first. This is not an easy effort but it is necessary. She would like a specific list of chemicals we won't use in parks and open spaces and it should include 2,4 D, Glyphosate, and nicotinoids. She noted mechanical weed pulling is expensive and we will need to address the consequences of not spraying. It needs to be a community effort; it is not inexpensive or easy.

Councilmember Dickinson stated the Council needs to know what the expectations are. We have to say if this is important to us then invest in it; it is not a small task.

Mayor Stolzmann reviewed the staff direction asking it include a list of what resources are needed to eliminate the use of Glyphosate and 2, 4-D, continuing no use of nicotinoids, and stop using of organophosphates in parks, open space, and medians.

Mayor Pro Tem Maloney stated he would like recommendations on the timing as well.

City Manager Balser stated staff will come back with options for phasing, strategies, and implementation.

Councilmember Fahey noted the upcoming weed pull on Earth Day.

Councilmember Brown stated he is mindful that if implementation is starting this spring it may be hard to do given it is already almost March.

ADVANCED AGENDA

Members reviewed the advanced agenda.

ADJOURN

Members adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Ashley Stolzmann, Mayor

Meredyth Muth, City Clerk